

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

(AMENDMENT IN RESPONSE TO FIRST OFFICE ACTION DATED APRIL 6, 2004.

Serial Number 10/717,165 filed November 11, 2003)

CLAIMS

What I claim is:

1. (currently amended) In an improved vehicle with a passenger compartment forward and an open rear portion, the improvement comprising:
a first tailgate disposed proximal an enclosed rear portion of said passenger compartment and, at least in its majority and when in a vertical orientation, forward of the open rear portion of the improved vehicle, and said first tailgate may be opened to [[so that it is in]] a horizontal orientation and disposed, at least in its majority, internal to a first tailgate recess in a floor of the open rear portion and wherein said first tailgate has a retractable window wherein said retractable window is retractable into said first tailgate.
2. (currently amended) The improved vehicle of claim 1 which further comprises a passenger compartment rear seat disposed, at least in its majority, proximal to and forward of a forward portion of said first tailgate [[as seen]] when said first tailgate is in its vertical orientation, wherein said rear passenger seat, when used for passenger seating, is composed of vertically and horizontally oriented seating elements, wherein support portions of said vertically and horizontally oriented seating elements are disposed distal from their passenger seating surfaces and are composed, at least primarily, of rigid materials, and wherein said rear passenger seat elements may be reoriented such that their

support portions are upward to thereby form portions of a horizontal floor that extends rearward to proximal a second tailgate disposed proximal a rear end of the open rear portion of the vehicle.

3. (original) The improved vehicle of claim 2 wherein said horizontally oriented seating element support portion has a lip on its support portion such that said lip acts to prevent cargo from sliding forward when the support portion is acting as a floor extension.
4. (original) The improved vehicle of claim 2 wherein said vertically and horizontally oriented seating elements rotate about pivots.
5. (canceled)
6. (currently amended) The improved vehicle of claim 1 which further comprises a first tailgate cover that serves as a cover for the first tailgate recess when the first tailgate is in its vertical orientation.
7. (original) The improved vehicle of claim 1 which further comprises a first tailgate cover that covers the first tailgate when it is in its horizontal orientation.
8. (currently amended) The improved vehicle of claim 1 which further comprises a multi-element retractable cover, a height of said multi-element retractable cover proximal a height of the passenger compartment [[height]] and capable of covering a open rear [[open]] portion of the improved vehicle.
9. (currently amended) The improved vehicle of claim 1 which further comprises a second tailgate disposed proximal an aft end of the open rear portion of the improved vehicle [[8 wherein said multi-element retractable

cover further comprises a spacer capable of joining two or more portions of the multi-element retractable cover]].

10. (currently amended) The improved vehicle of claim 1 wherein said second tailgate includes a retractable window [[8 wherein said multi-element retractable cover further comprises means for two or more portions of the multi-element cover, as seen in a transverse vertical plane of the vehicle, to support each other]] .

11-19. (cancelled)

20. (original) In an improved vehicle with a forward passenger compartment and a cargo area disposed rearward of the forward passenger area, the improvement comprising:

a first tailgate disposed between the passenger compartment and the cargo area, said first tailgate rotatable rearward and downward into a first tailgate recess in a cargo area floor, passenger seating proximal to and forward of the first tailgate, said passenger seating composed of a rear vertical member capable of rotating forward to form an extension to the cargo area floor and a forward horizontal member capable of rotating forward to form an extension to the cargo area floor.

21. (original) The improved vehicle of claim 20 wherein said first tailgate includes a retractable window.

22. (original) The improved vehicle of claim 20 which further comprises a rotatable cover capable of covering the first tailgate recess in the cargo area floor.

23. (original) The improved vehicle of claim 20 which further comprises a second tailgate disposed proximal an aft end of the cargo area.
24. (currently amended) The improved vehicle of claim 23 ~~[[20]]~~ wherein said second tailgate includes a retractable window.
25. (currently amended) The improved vehicle of claim 20 which further comprises a retractable cover that, when extended rearward, covers the cargo area and wherein a height of said retractable cover is proximal a height of the passenger compartment.
26. (new) The improved vehicle of claim 20 wherein said passenger seat is composed of vertically and horizontally oriented seating elements, wherein support portions of said vertically and horizontally oriented seating elements are disposed distal from their passenger seating surfaces and are composed, at least primarily, of rigid materials.
27. (new) The improved vehicle of claim 20 wherein said forward horizontal member has a lip on its support portion such that said lip acts to prevent cargo from sliding forward when the support portion is acting as a floor extension.
28. (new) In an improved vehicle with a passenger compartment forward and an open rear portion, the improvement comprising:
a first tailgate disposed proximal an enclosed rear portion of said passenger compartment and, at least in its majority and when in a vertical orientation, forward of the open rear portion of the improved vehicle, and said first tailgate may be opened to a horizontal orientation and disposed, at least in its majority, internal to a first tailgate recess in a floor of the open rear portion

and which further comprises a first tailgate cover that serves as a cover for the first tailgate recess when the first tailgate is in its vertical orientation and as a cover for the first tailgate when said first tailgate is in its horizontal orientation.

29. (new) The improved vehicle of claim 28 wherein said first tailgate has a retractable window wherein said retractable window is retractable into said first tailgate.
30. (new) The improved vehicle of claim 28 which further comprises a second tailgate disposed proximal an aft end of the open rear portion of the improved vehicle.
31. (new) The improved vehicle of claim 30 wherein said second tailgate includes a retractable window.
32. (new) The improved vehicle of claim 28 which further comprises a multi-element retractable cover, a height of said multi-element retractable cover proximal a height of the passenger compartment and capable of covering the open rear portion of the improved vehicle.
33. (new) The improved vehicle of claim 28 which further comprises a passenger compartment rear seat disposed, at least in its majority, proximal to and forward of a forward portion of said first tailgate when said first tailgate is in its vertical orientation, wherein said rear passenger seat, when used for passenger seating, is composed of vertically and horizontally oriented seating elements, wherein support portions of said vertically and horizontally oriented seating elements are disposed distal from their passenger seating surfaces and

are composed, at least primarily, of rigid materials, and wherein said rear passenger seat elements may be reoriented such that their support portions are upward to thereby form portions of a horizontal floor that extends rearward to proximal a second tailgate disposed proximal a rear end of the open rear portion of the vehicle.

34. (new) The improved vehicle of claim 33 wherein said horizontally oriented seating element support portion has a lip on its support portion such that said lip acts to prevent cargo from sliding forward when the support portion is acting as a floor extension.
35. (new) The improved vehicle of claim 33 wherein said vertically and horizontally oriented seating elements rotate about pivots.